

# The Art of School Leadership

**Charter School Director Dialogue Session**



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**September 26, 2008**

# Leadership is about RELATIONSHIPS

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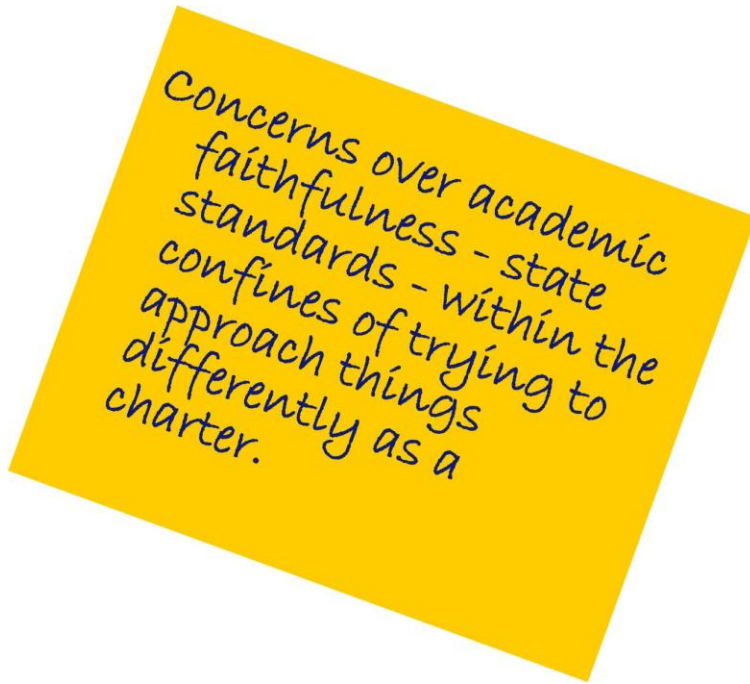
A good leader nurtures relationships through trust, expectations, and empowerment.

# Challenges

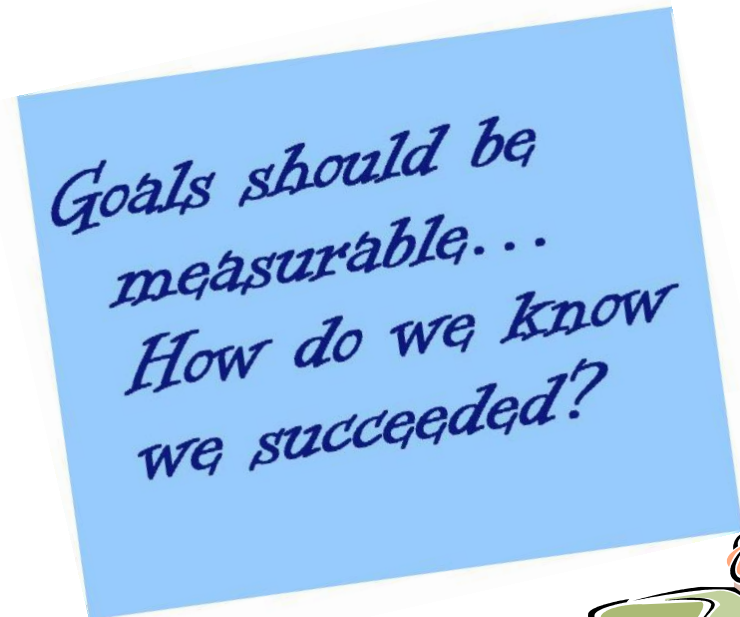
On an **orange** Post-it, write down **challenges** you face as an administrator. Place them on the left side of the appropriate chart.

On a **blue** Post-it, write down **suggestions** you have found helpful or successful. Place them on the right side of the appropriate chart.

## Challenges



## Suggestions



Strong leaders are artists... they inspire, applaud, chastise, and steer.

# Topics

1

**Leading a School – Chapter 1**

2

**Promoting Collegiality – Chapter 2**

3

**Setting Goals – Chapter 4**

4

**Wielding Power – Chapter 5**

5

**Impact on Students – 24/7**



**Strong leaders are artists because they recognize that there is no one solution formula.**

# Study Guide

- **Preview** the assigned chapter and its guiding questions
  - **Select** 1 or 2 questions to answer or address
- **Read** the chapter
  - **Write** a list of 4 or 5 important 'lessons' or insights on chart paper
- **Post** your chart somewhere in the room when finished
  - **Choose** a spokesperson
- **Share** your list with the group when groups are finished



# Group Charts

## Leadership

- All about relationship building – clear communication, build trust
- Don't be afraid to establish roles and responsibilities
- Administrator has leadership role – decide when the decision belongs to whom
- We are driven – need to step back and acknowledge success and achievement
- Establish expectations of excellence
- Go home! (Starts with administrator)
- Hold onto perfection re: Vision/Goals

## Goals

- Share goals – make, state, and share
- Sharing goals has power, but some goals are private/personal
- Set aside time to “just think”
- Gains from sharing goals across grades, content, etc.:
  - Shared progress
  - Common focus
  - Similar issues & vocabulary
  - Discipline (content) integration

## Collegiality

- Hire those who are willing to learn and share
- Allow time for purposely scheduled PD & collaboration
- Highlight good teaching practices
  - Include them in directed instr.
- Clarify vision and goals – work together to achieve them
- Discuss & define successful teaching and students as a faculty
- Support, use time wisely

## Power

- Forms of power
  - Reward
  - Coercive
  - Legitimate
  - Referent
  - Expert
- Should be wielding “Advocacy power”
  - Flexibility w/in framework
  - Clear/frequent feedback

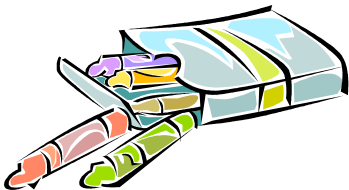
# Experience from the Field

◆ Thank you, Heather Shepherd! (Channing Hall)

- [hshepherd@channinghall.net](mailto:hshepherd@channinghall.net)

◆ Thank you, Debby Gomberg! (North Davis Prep)

- [dgomberg@northdavisprep.org](mailto:dgomberg@northdavisprep.org)



# Review the Charts – Academic

## ◆ Concerns...

- Time
  - Establishing student-specific goals w/parents
  - Results aren't seen right away
- Teachers
  - Quality
  - So many new & isolated teachers
- SIS
  - USOE staff unhelpful
  - "Clunky"
  - Non-intuitive
  - Transcripts
  - GPA Reports
- Trying to please everyone (parents, state, teachers, students)
- Meeting mandated state requirements for graduation with increase of units of credit – especially while honoring charter mission (performing arts, etc.)
- Leveling math

## ◆ Suggestions...

- State curriculum requirements – always look for compromise first before assuming you have to have it your way
- Setting and monitoring "SMART" goals
- Parent/Teacher and Student Conferences
- Use Assessments (ACT, UBSCT, CBT's, CTE)
- Put transcripts back on SIS



# Review the Charts – Collaboration

## ◆ Concerns...

- Time
  - Hard to find sufficient time to do it well
  - How to best utilize time
  - Creating time when all staff can come together
  - Turns into a faculty meeting every week
- Ego
- Helping teachers become “excellent” teachers
- Technical issues such as CBT, CE Instruction, school data base needs without “lotsa” funds for hardware, software, and support.
- Overcoming hostility from traditional public schools to join heads and work together
- Difficult when no one else looks just like us

## ◆ Suggestions...

- Weekly, if not daily, check-ins with teachers
- Choose carefully – pick the ones that will make the greatest impact
- On-line space/communication
  - Text groups
  - Facebook
  - Chat/Wiki
  - Newsgroup
- I use collaboration for everything I can
- Time consuming, but necessary – gives you that needed community support
- It MUST be scheduled during the day
- Establish goals, time to meet, and expectations
- Opportunities to interact with other schools is valuable

# Review the Charts – Community

## ◆ Concerns...

- Public Perception
  - Awareness of our existence & successes
  - Public vs. Charter as enemies of one another
  - Misinformation (public schools, certified teachers, no tuition, etc.)
  - Difficult to maintain loyalty and patience when first opening with “hiccups” (lack of library resources, building issues, etc.) Parents are reactionary
  - Being a stranger to the culture
- Traffic (carpool, back-up plans, etc.)
- Wide diversity among people
- Time consuming
  - The work every year of building professional community around school’s vision with new staff members
- Building partnerships
  - Balance interests of parents, students, staff, & board
  - Promoting professionalism & optimism
  - Bureaucracy

## ◆ Suggestions...

- Works hand-in-hand with collaboration – has a very broad reach
- Successes – small daily victories with children & staff
- Make visits to local schools, communities, businesses – let them know your vision
- See next slide

# Comment on Community

- ◆ “Our community has always been pretty good. Most people choose us for uniforms, curriculum and they are mad at the district. So we start off in a good position. Maintaining that position is another story. I think being honest with parents and dealing with what they are complaining about is the key. I don't back down (ever) but I do listen. I never change a judgment but I will apologize and I will take time to explain some of the reasons for the change or whatever the situation is. I have had the angry mobs before but I stick to my guns, listen, talk to them, take my time and in the end they leave as my number 1 advocate. I guess the bottom line is I set high standards for the students as well as the parents. I don't let them get away with anything. The funny thing is the most angry parents have turned out to be my biggest fans.”
  - ◆ “So, it isn't that I don't face any problems but I definitely don't back down and my board backs me 100%. They have never overturned a decision. I may be at odds with my board at times but my staff, parents and students would never know that. I have also never made a major decision without the board's support but I go back to the philosophy that we will always do what is in the best interest of the child and the staff. The parents don't run the building they just support it. It takes some time to train the parents but they really do appreciate being heard, explanations, and my time.”
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# Review the Charts – Prioritizing

## ◆ Concerns...

- Focusing on what is urgent
  - What is urgent?
  - When to know that it is okay to table an idea/project/suggestion
  - Everything from the state seems to have equal priority – NOW
  - What do you do first? (Reports, Discipline, Whining Staff, Curriculum, Demands, Pick-up/drop off)
    - 400 emails a day!
- Difficult when performing multiple roles (manager, assessment, Title 1, MESA, etc., etc., etc.)
- Feel like a fireman dealing w/crisis of the day vs. accomplishing goals
- Time
  - Running the school makes it hard to be visionary
  - Money & time are serious issues for us
  - So much to do, so little time

## ◆ Suggestions...

- Data
  - Gathering
  - Analyzing
  - Using to affect plans
- Make your teachers happy. Happy teachers make everyone happy in the end.
- Be out and about knowing what's going on

# Review the Charts – Vision / Goals

## ◆ Concerns...

- Getting board to establish specific, measurable goals to align with charter
- Having time to set them
- Goals – create, role-modeling, citizens
- Board and founding board goals/vision & meshing w/realities & logistics
- Getting students to catch the long-range vision
- Getting students', parents', and teachers' buy-in to the overall vision of our school.
- Staying true long term to our vision sometimes gets lost in the day-to-day
- Educating and re educating and re-educating parents and staff on culture

## ◆ Suggestions...

- Recommit every year & hold strong
- Keep your vision/mission in mind always
- I need them and cannot prioritize, collaborate, or function without them
- Refer to policies and procedures for guidance
- Align everything with the vision

# Review the Charts – Others

## ◆ Concerns...

- Bureaucracy
  - Wanting to do things differently-when the state demands so much uniformity
  - District-level reports are overwhelming for individual schools (UPIPS, CUSAP)
  - Difficult to do things differently with same state mandates and obligations that everyone else has
  - Assessment, EYE, SpEd-all important, but seem more complicated at the charter level
  - Avoiding the “Bureaucratic Creep”
- Getting enrollment
- Finding staff who are able and capable of wearing many hats (special ed., curriculum, assessment)
- Balancing or maybe figuring out which of my issues are because we are a charter school and which are just educational issues

## ◆ Suggestions...

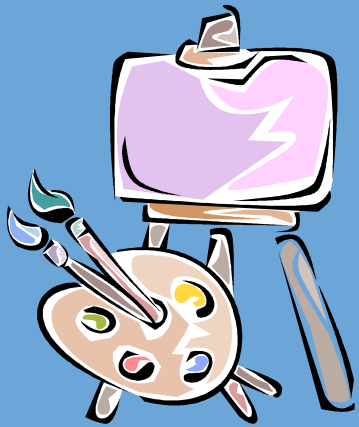
- Board/Director relationship needs to be built at every meeting every year
- Smile
- Remember-you make a difference!!
- Enjoy the journey!!

# Effective leaders...

...begin by knowing their talents and challenges.

...understand how their leadership skills relate to problems.

...use their ability to make others better, help them grow, support and challenge them, and to learn from and with them.



## Remember...

- Fill out the evaluation
- Our next session is Oct. 24
- Have a safe ride home!

# Thank You !